REMARKS

This Reply is submitted in response to the final Office Action dated March 4, 2008. Claims 1, 2, 4-9, 11-16, and 18-22 remain present in this application. In the present Office Action: claims 8-14 were objected to as being directed to a software component system, per se; claims 1-4, 7-11, 14-18, 21, and 22 were rejected under 35 § U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,252,592 (hereinafter "King") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,646,250 (hereinafter "Childress"); and claims 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, and 20 were rejected under 35 § U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over King in view of Childress and "Grouping objects for Tabbing and Cursoring in Visual Programming (hereinafter "Cox").

Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 8, and 15 for clarification of Applicants' claimed subject matter. More specifically, the subject matter of: dependent claim 3 has been substantially incorporated into independent claim 1; dependent claim 10 has been substantially incorporated into independent claim 8; and dependent claim 17 has been substantially incorporated into independent claim 15. Applicants have also amended dependent claims 2, 5-7, 9, 12-14, 16, and 19-22 for clarification and canceled claims 3, 10, 17. No new matter has been entered with the amendments to the claims. Applicants respectfully request entry of the claim amendments, as the amendments put the claims in better form for consideration on appeal. With this amendment Applicants do not concede that the subject matter of independent claims 1, 8, and 15 (prior to amendment) was not patentable in view of the applied art and may file one or more continuing applications to pursue the subject matter of independent claims 1, 8, and 15 as the claims existed prior to this amendment.

At the outset, Applicants note that King is directed to automatic tab scanning of graphically represented elements in program applications. Fig. 1 of King illustrates a prior art approach for labeling elements to indicate a tabbing order (which is substantially similar to the prior art approach shown in Applicants' Fig. 1). As noted at column 5, lines 20-35 of King, according to King, visual elements are automatically scanned with visual elements being highlighted (i.e., receiving focus) individually one at a time in the sequential order defined by the tabbing order without requiring an indication that the next visual element in the tabbing order is to receive focus. That is, King teaches that automatic scanning obviates the need for labeling elements to indicate a tabbing order (as is shown in Fig. 1 of King). In this manner, King teaches away from labeling elements to indicate a tabbing order and teaches the superiority of

sequentially highlighting elements to indicate a tabbing order.

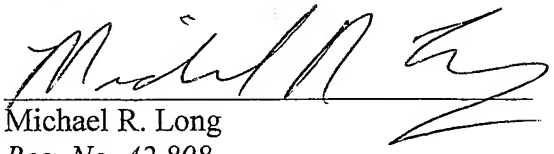
Applicants agree that King does not expressly teach a graphical linking element that extends between a plurality of visual elements. Applicants also submit that King also does not implicitly teach a graphical linking element that extends between a plurality of visual elements. Applicants also agree that Childress discloses the use of arrows to draw attention to mandatory entry fields of a data entry screen. However, Applicants do not agree that Childress suggests (alone or in combination with King) a graphical linking element that extends between a plurality of visual elements. In contrast to King, Childress is merely directed (in pertinent part) to identifying (to a user of a data entry screen) where data may be entered and those fields where data must be entered. While Childress discloses the use of arrows to indicate mandatory entry fields, the Childress arrows do not extend between fields and do not provide an indication of a relationship between fields. Nor does the combination of King and Childress teach or suggest the use of arrows between elements to indicate a tabbing order. As noted above, King discloses sequentially highlighting visual elements to indicate a tabbing order and Childress merely discloses using arrows to draw attention to a particular entry field of a data entry screen. Moreover, Childress is not directed to indicating a tabbing order of elements of a data entry screen.

With respect to the rejection of independent claims 1, 8, and 15, Applicants respectfully submit that none of applied art, alone or in combination, teach or suggest a first graphical linking element that extends between first and second visual elements included in a plurality of visual elements. Furthermore, none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teach or suggest a first graphical linking element that includes a line segment that extends between and substantially graphically connects first and second visual elements and a graphical element that indicates a direction of sequential tabbing order between the first and second visual elements.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Applicants' independent claims 1, 8, and 15 are allowable over the applied art of record. Additionally, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2, 4-7, 9, 11-14, 16, and 18-22 are also allowable for at least the reason that the claims depend on allowable claims.

Prior to action on this Reply, Applicants request a telephone interview with the Examiner. The undersigned attorney may be reached at (512) 617-5521.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael R. Long
Reg. No. 42,808
DILLON & YUDELL LLP
8911 North Capital of Texas Highway, Ste. 2110
Austin, Texas 78759
Telephone (512) 617-5521
Facsimile (512) 343-6446

ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANT(S)